

PARIS OFFICIALS KNOW NOTHING OF CRANE SENTENCE

Former Minister Tells of Clash
Between United States
Consul and French.

PARIS, May 26 (Associated Press).—The French Foreign Office has no knowledge of the reported conviction of Charles R. Crane, former American Minister to China, by a French military court in Damascus on a charge of inciting a riot, as reported in press despatches, it was stated this morning.

There were troubles in Syria provoked by "injurious talk" by Mr. Crane, Foreign Office officials said, but up to the present moment they had no information regarding any condemnation. Mr. Crane himself

said he was confident the report of his conviction was an error.

Mr. Crane said that an incident had occurred between the United States Consul and the French military authorities at Damascus before Mr. Crane's arrival, when the Consul hauled down the American flag, took down his shield and refused to have any further relations with the French authorities until they apologized.

"Three or four days went by and the French became very uneasy," Mr. Crane added. "A sort of an apology was made, which our Consul refused to accept. Then a more formal one was sent, which he did accept, and resumed relations."

Mr. Crane appears to have expressed himself very plainly to the Mandate Commission of the League of Nations Council in Geneva last week regarding the disturbed political situation in Syria. The substance of his declaration was that the Syrians wanted first of all complete independence, and failing that preferred that the United States take the mandate over the country. If the Americans were unwilling, he said, the Syrians preferred Great Britain, but under no circumstances wished to be under the French mandate.

He recited events in Syria which had led up to the violent manifestations on the part of the inhabitants, averring that the French military had

intervened with machine guns, shooting down some of the demonstrators. Mr. Crane believes that if any action was taken leading to the imposition against him of a sentence of twenty years, as reported, it must have been due to a misunderstanding. He recognizes that the French military authorities in Syria may have misconstrued the nature of the demonstration by the natives around his automobile as he was leaving Damascus after his visit there early in April.

PARIS, May 26.—The Foreign Office to-day characterized the story of Charles R. Crane's sentence as "absurd."

"If Crane had been sentenced he would not be in Paris," a statement said. The Foreign Office added there had been some trouble in Damascus after Crane left, and that others had been sentenced, which possibly gave rise to the error.

Crane was in Beirut and interviewed Gen. Gouraud at Constantinople, being most cordially received by the French Commander, at the time he was reported to be under sentence.

WASHINGTON, May 26.—A resolution directing Secretary Hughes to make immediate inquiry of the French Government as to the correctness of reports concerning imposition of a twenty-year sentence upon Charles R. Crane by a French Military Court at Damascus was introduced to-day by Representative Sabath, Democrat, Ill.

JURY ORGANIZED FOR WAR FRAUDS

Judge Cautions Them Not
to Indict Lightly—Hearings
Next Week.

WASHINGTON, May 26.—Instructions to perform their duty without respect to persons and to conduct conscientiously inquiries into matters laid before them were given to-day by Chief Justice McCoy of the District

of Columbia Supreme Court to the Special Grand Jury impaneled to hear testimony concerning alleged war contract frauds.

"No man is to be indicted lightly, because by an indictment a stain which may be indelible is left on the name of a citizen," cautioned the Chief Justice.

Chief Justice McCoy designated George C. Topham, a retired trunk manufacturer, as foreman of the Grand Jury, which includes Corcoran Thom, Vice President of the American Security & Trust Company, at

Washington. The hearing of cases will begin next Wednesday.

FAILS TO FORCE INVESTIGATION.
WASHINGTON, May 26.—A fight by Representative Johnson (Rep., N. D.) to force the House to take up his resolution for investigation of charges of laxity on the part of the Department of Justice in prosecuting war frauds failed to-day when Speaker Gillett ruled that his claim that the resolution was being suppressed did not constitute privilege.

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2.65

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